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of the early epoch; ecclesiastical organization and a ritualistic system of worship were the keynote of the period which followed. In the place of the Lord arose the gospels; in the place of the apostle, the epistles; and in the place of the spirit, the letter.

The New Testament has always possessed great advantage over the Old from the fact that in the field both of the lower criticism and of external evidence it has rested upon a much broader basis; and it would appear from the frequency and importance of the discoveries made during the last few decades in these same lines as though it were not to be robbed of its pre-eminence. New light is constantly breaking upon the New Testament, and that it is having its inevitable effect is manifest from the attitude of the writings just passed in review. For the inquiring novice an excellent book has been written focusing the principal contributions of these last days, by a Maryland pastor.¹⁰

Frederick Palmer has written a much-needed "appreciation" of the Apocalypse.¹¹ With this as with every other book of the Scripture canon, only more so, a recognition of the literary and political circumstances of its time is essential to any right knowledge of its meaning or message. A large percentage of the problems of biblical criticism would be self-solved if the western world could only learn once and for all that it is dealing with an oriental literature. But to attempt to square the apocalypse of a prophet with the ideas and ideals of an occidental logician is of all things most preposterous. Professor Moulton's dramatic scheme is in some respects preferable to Mr. Palmer's, but the subjects of the six preliminary studies of the latter—and these comprise the body of his book—have nowhere been more strongly and sanely developed.

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THE BOOK OF GENESIS

There is perhaps no other book in the Old Testament which, in regard to the modern view of it, interests laymen and students alike as much as the book of Genesis. It presents peculiar problems which demand the attention of all educated people; for those ancient questions are ever asked again: How was the world created? What is the origin of sin and

¹⁰*New Light on the New Testament.* By Parke P. Flournoy. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1903. xxi + 193 pages.

¹¹*The Drama of the Apocalypse.* By Frederick Palmer. New York: Macmillan, 1903. viii + 192 pages.

misery?—to say nothing of the deluge and Abraham and the patriarchs. What position shall we take, in the light of modern science, physical and historical, in regard to these problems? Can the Old Testament still be regarded as giving dogmatic and absolutely reliable information about all these things?

In view of the many problems which, to modern readers, the book of Genesis suggests, it will be a satisfaction to me if I may have succeeded in making my volume a contribution, however slight, to that adjustment of theology to the new knowledge of the past which has been called a "crying need" of the times.

Thus says Driver in the Preface to his new commentary on Genesis (p. xi).¹ That he has succeeded in this, and has made an *important* contribution, need hardly be said; for we have here again a ripe fruit of years of patient, painstaking research, characterized by that same calm and deliberate weighing of evidence for which Driver is famous. He is never hasty, always accurate, and invariably sane.

The starting-point of the whole work is stated in the Preface, p. xi.

The critical and historical view of the book of Genesis—which extended to Scripture generally appears to me to be the only basis upon which the progressive revelation contained in the Bible can be properly apprehended, and the spiritual authority of the Bible ultimately maintained—has been assumed throughout.

Now, there is no book which teaches the student the main principle of modern Old Testament study better than the book of Genesis—the one great principle, that we must determine, first, what the Old Testament itself says, independently of our own religious convictions; secondly, what our own conceptions are; and, thirdly, in how far the Old Testament ideas and our own ideas can be brought into relation, and if possible harmony, with each other. Let us take as an illustration the story of creation. The first duty of the exegete is to get a clear idea of the teaching of the first chapter of Genesis, and as vivid an impression as possible of the biblical idea of the universe and of how it came into existence. When this is done, he ought to recognize frankly that the modern scientific conception is entirely different from this biblical conception, and that the two cannot be harmonized. If he now tries to relate the two, he is confronted by several problems. The first is that we have two accounts of the creation in the book of Genesis, the one in chap. 1, the other in chap. 2, not to mention here the various hints in other Old Testament books which point to a still different story. He recognizes that Hebrew tradition is not entirely

¹ *The Book of Genesis, with Introduction and Notes.* By S. R. Driver. London: Methuen & Co., 1904. xxii, lxxiv, 420 pages. It belongs to the "Westminster Commentaries" series, edited by Professor Walter Lock.

harmonious in regard to the creation, and that the first chapter of Genesis is the great end of a long development of speculations as to the creation of the world. The second is that the Old Testament conception, as far as the scientific part of it is concerned, is essentially the conception which the Semitic world in general possessed, and that it is not peculiar to the Hebrews. The Hebrew picture of the universe is the same as, for instance, that of the Babylonians, in whose literature we find important parallels. The natural science of the Old Testament is then the science of its own time; its astronomy, its geography (I refer here to Gen., chap. 2), and its ethnography belonged to the ancient world. There is no "inspired" natural science in the Old Testament authoritative for all time. If this is once seen, the strife between natural science and the Old Testament is at an end. In scientific matters the Old Testament had *its* ideas—i. e., those of its own times—and we have *our* ideas—i. e., those of modern science. The earth was not created in seven days; the sky is not a firmament, a heavy expanse; etc. These ideas are antiquated and no longer tenable.

But the very comparison with other literatures which has brought us to this conclusion forces upon us another profound impression, namely, that of the uniqueness of the religious element in the story. Over against polytheism, with its mythology, we have here monotheism. God is the creator and ruler of the universe, and is deeply interested in its welfare. We marvel at the power of this religion which could transform such material in this way. We recognize that we modern Christian people still believe this to be true. It is no matter of scientific controversy; natural science proper has nothing to say on this point. It is a matter of theistic belief, a metaphysical problem, a question of theism over against pantheism, materialism, etc. But modern theists agree in this question with the Old Testament. The religious element, therefore, has a permanent value. One must, of course, not jump to the conclusion that this religious truth was really all that the author of Gen., chap. 1, meant to teach, or that the scientific part was altogether nonessential to him; for he certainly wished to teach, not merely the creatorship of God, but also the mode and order of creation. We may not easily be too precise on this point. Thus, for instance, Driver says in another connection:

The account given of the formation of woman is, naturally, not to be understood literally; but under a symbolical form, it teaches . . . the deep ethical and social significance which underlies the difference between the sexes. (P. 56.)

This statement may easily be misunderstood. The *narrator* meant it literally; he believed that woman had been created thus and in no other way. For him it is no symbol. *We* do not believe so any more. But

we still believe in "the deep ethical and social significance which underlies the difference of the sexes." The dress changes, but the underlying truth is permanent. It is significant that it is the religious element which is unique in the Old Testament; it is that which the other nations did not possess. The exegete need, of course, not answer the question where the author got this eternal truth. After he has shown which element the Old Testament has in common with the records of other nations and pointed out its own unique element, his task is done; for that question is not an exegetical, but a theological one. The theologian must answer it, and his answer will depend on his own individuality—whether he believes it to be due to revelation, or to the peculiar fitness of the Hebrew, in the evolution of religion, for carrying religion farther and higher. But even though we do not any more believe that the Hebrews had a monopoly of religious truth, we must declare, as the result of purely historical study, that the central line of the religious development of the race runs through Israel. The religious supremacy of Israel is unimpaired. How the above considerations have affected our ideas of inspiration is well known. Driver has golden words on this topic in sec. 4 of his introduction on "The Religious Value of the Book of Genesis."

If we take as another illustration the famous fourteenth chapter, we find two different historical elements—the world-historic and the Abrahamic element. Now, granted for the moment that the monuments had proved that this confederacy of kings made this campaign against the cities of the plain—and I believe we shall some day find that all of this is historically correct—we should have here painted on this true historical background the romantic figure of Abraham conquering the army of great empires with but 318 men! It is this Abrahamic element that is historically the most troublesome, for, according to our modern historical conception, that part of the story is simply impossible. Now, whether we bring it into harmony with our modern ideas by trimming it as Driver does, or by resolutely regarding it as a late romance intended to glorify Abraham, the essentially religious element we Christians still believe to be true: with God we can conquer the whole world. That truth holds good, whether it is taught here in a romance or in exact history.

Truth is unchangeable, though it ever varies in the form in which it is expressed. But truth is not given all at once. Men learn little by little. The profoundest and most fundamental is, paradoxically enough, the simplest, and becomes axiomatic after it is once seen. But it takes a long time till men see it. "Progressive revelation" is the theological phrase for this. The truth is seen at first dimly and expressed in such forms as men use at

the time. The great spiritual seers do not consciously adapt their message to the capacity of the people, as if they knew the truth far better than they now state it; they express it in the best way of which they are capable. The expression is often clumsy, and to our mind even wrong. We should not shrink from stating this frankly, that even in the spiritual element we have to repudiate a good deal as being, to our minds, untrue. But there is always somewhere a ray of truth—very little it may be—even in the crudest belief. What could seem to us more simple than that God cannot be pleased by animal sacrifices? But what a long, long time it took before the great seers even recognized this! The little ray of light is here, the great religious conviction—but how crude and how misdirected! It is therefore not merely the scientific and historical part that is affected by “progressive revelation,” but the religious element as well. The progress of truth is still going on. A hundred years from now men will wonder, not only at the amount of truth we possess, but also at the amount of contradictions implied, which we do not perceive as such. But they will be grateful, no less than we, that some of the profoundest and most fundamental truths have been seen so clearly and expressed so finely already in the book of Genesis, and that they have been lights in the history of human endeavor, pointing men upward and leading them onward to the Truth itself.

Driver has earned the gratitude, not merely of theologians or theological students, but of everybody interested in modern religion, by frankly looking at the various problems, and stating the results of his investigation in his usual calm and dignified manner. That he has “always endeavored, as occasion offered, to point out the main religious lessons which the book of Genesis contains, and the position taken by it in the history of revelation,” even though “the commentaries in the present series are not intended to be homiletic or devotional” (Preface, p. xi), will be valued very highly. This is usually not done, but it is really just the thing that students need; for it is so easy for them to get lost in the mass of literary and historical questions that they are prone to overlook the religious. None can help admiring the marvelous power of the Hebrew religion when he has once seen it at work in transforming the crudest conceptions and mythological tales into deeply ethical and theistic stories.

A great deal of wisdom has been displayed in the selection of the material.

A minute discussion of critical questions has not seemed to me to be necessary. (P. xi.) It has been my endeavor, while eschewing theories and speculations, which, however brilliant, seem to rest on no sufficient foundation, to place the reader, as far as was practicable, in possession of such facts as really throw light

upon Genesis, and in cases where, from the nature of the question to be solved, certainty was unattainable, to enable him to form an estimate of the probabilities for himself. (P. ix.)

This evidently accounts for the omission, e. g., of Stade's interesting suggestion in regard to the sign of Kain, and of so many of Gunkel's daring propositions. Sometimes, indeed, one rather regrets this, and may be inclined to feel as if Driver were too cautious; but when, for instance, his treatment of Jacob's struggle at Penuel is compared with Gunkel's, one is grateful for his wise moderation. In a commentary like this such speculations would defeat the aim of the author.

The Introduction, pp. i-lxxiv, contains four important essays. The first section on the "Structure of the Book of Genesis, and Characteristics of its Component Parts" is as masterly and concise a treatment as can be found anywhere. I do not know how it is in England, but in this country the impression prevails among many theological students that the separation of the different sources is extremely difficult and can be made only by expert Hebraists. It is recognized well enough that there are doublets and contradictions which lead one to the conclusion that the narrative is composite, but that is about all. In view of this, it would seem as if it might have been a capital thing if Driver had expanded his remarks in the Introduction, say on the deluge story, and had shown in detail how to go about separating the entire narrative. It would at once remove the impression that the whole procedure is extremely subjective and arbitrary, and that scholars differ much when it comes to the detail work of separation. For a man will not be thoroughly convinced until he has made the experiment himself, at least at some one given point, to his own satisfaction. I do not mean to say that Driver has not given all the material for this, but nothing is better than an example, just as in mathematics a problem is all the more readily grasped by the student if an example is given which shows him exactly how to go to work.

In the second section "The Chronology of Genesis" is shown in detail to be of no historical value. The third section treats the "Historical Value of the Book of Genesis" in two divisions—(a) the prehistoric period, (b) the patriarchal period. In the former, Driver states the conclusion as follows:

The writers to whom we owe the first eleven chapters of Genesis *report faithfully what was currently believed among the Hebrews* respecting the early history of mankind . . . yet there was much they *did not know, and could not take cognizance of*: these chapters . . . contain no account of the *real* beginnings either of the earth itself, or of man and human civilization upon it. (P. xlii.)

The second division is an extremely careful and valuable résumé of Driver's position on the important questions of the historicity and the tribal character of the patriarchs. On the latter he concludes with characteristic frankness and caution:

The explanation may be adopted reasonably in particular instances (pp. liv, lx); but, applied universally, it would seem to create greater difficulties and improbabilities than it removes. (P. lvii.)

On the former he says:

Although . . . the evidence for the historicity of the patriarchs is not such as will satisfy the ordinary canons of historical criticism, it is still, all things considered, difficult to believe that *some* foundation of actual personal history does not underlie the patriarchal narratives. And, in fact, the view which on the whole may be said best to satisfy the circumstances of the case is the view that the patriarchs are historical persons, and that the accounts which we have of them are *in outline* historically true, but that their characters are idealized, and their biographies not unfrequently colored by the feelings and associations of a later age. (Pp. lvii, lviii.)

That this is the most satisfactory view is also my conviction. The fourth section, on "The Religious Value of the Book of Genesis," will undoubtedly for some be the most valuable part of the Introduction; and, indeed, it should be read by everybody, no matter how many other essays on the subject are not read.

Only a few of the many "Additional Notes" which are scattered all through the book can be named. They are on such subjects as the cosmogony of Genesis, the sabbath, the cherubim, the historical character of the deluge, Nimrod and Babylon, Ur and the Hebrews, the angel of Jehovah, circumcision, land-tenure in Egypt, etc. At the end of the volume there are two full excursions: (1) on "The Names of God in Genesis," pp. 402-9; (2) on "Gen. XLIX. 10 ('Until Shiloh come')," pp. 410-15. Everything is characterized by that thoroughness, clearness, and fairness which stamp all of Driver's work.

When it is considered that no real commentary on Genesis has appeared in English since 1882, it is a matter of profound gratification that this new commentary is one of the first rank, and that it leaves no reasonable demand unsatisfied. It does what it aims to do: (1) explains the text of Genesis, and (2) acquaints the reader with the position held by the book, in accordance with our present knowledge, from both a historical and a religious point of view (p. ix). And it does it admirably.

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